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AUTHOR Archwamety, Teara
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ABSTRACT

This study of Japanese and American exchange students focuses on the "perceived" rather than on the "real" impact of international education on one's own society and on the society hosting the foreign student. Thirty-four randomly selected American undergraduate students attending a Japanese university in Osaka, Japan and 34 randomly selected Japanese students who had just returned from a year of international study abroad participated in the study. The Japanese and American students' perceptions of the impact of their studies on the politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations of their home country and their host country were researched. The Japanese students viewed the impact of their return on the Japanese economy and technology as significantly more positive than the American students viewed the impact of their return on the U.S. economy and technology. American students viewed the impact of foreign students in the United States on the U.S. economy as significantly more positive than the Japanese students viewed the impact of foreign students in Japan on the Japanese economy. The view of both the American and Japanese students on the impact of international education was, in general, positive. (PRW)

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Perception of the Impact of International Education: Japanese vs. American Students

Teara Archwamety

University of Nebraska at Kearney

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Abstract

The purpose of the present research study was to compare Japanese students and American students on how they viewed (a) the impact of "students (Japanese or American) returning from abroad" on their own society's politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations, and (b) the impact of "foreign students" on their host (Japanese or American) society's politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations. Thirty-four randomly selected American students and 34 randomly selected Japanese students participated in the present study. The Japanese students viewed "the impact of returning Japanese students on Japanese economy and technology" as significantly more positive than the American students viewed "the impact of returning American students on U.S. economy and technology" ($p < .05$). On the other hand, the American students viewed "the impact of foreign students in the U.S. on U.S. economy" as significantly more positive than the Japanese students viewed "the impact of foreign students in Japan on Japanese economy" ($p < .05$). It was also noted, however, that the view of BOTH the American and Japanese students on the impact of international education was, in general, positive.

Perception of the Impact of International Education: Japanese vs. American Students

The participation in international education for any country consists of at least two aspects.

1. Sending students to study abroad.

2. Educating foreign students in one's own country.

Either of the above aspects could have an important impact on many facets of one's own society. The impact could be on one's own (a) political development, (b) economy, (c) technological advancement, (d) educational development, (e) knowledge expansion, and (f) international relations.

Numerous research studies have been conducted on the impact of international education on one's own country. Fry (1984), in his study of 84 nations, found students who studied abroad and returned home have positive impact on their own countries, both economically and politically. Nakayama's (1989) historical research of the higher education system in Japan indicated the impact of international education on one's own country's educational development.

The impact of students studying abroad could also be negative for their own countries, especially if they fail to return home (the "brain drain" problem). It was estimated that approximately one-third of the foreign students who came to the United States did not return to their home countries (Greer, 1983).

The impact of foreign students on their host countries, on the other hand, is not always viewed as positive by many host citizens. Barber and Morgan (1988) examined a recent concern in

the U.S. that there was a disproportionately large number of foreign students in the field of science and engineering at the graduate level. They were viewed as a threat to the academic and job opportunities of U.S. citizens. In Great Britain, a policy of charging foreign students the "full cost" of their education was instituted in 1979 (Mace, 1987).

Japan and the United States have long been major participants in international education. In 1991, Japan was host to about 41,000 foreign students (Kato, 1991). The number of foreign students in the U.S. for 1990 was estimated at 386,850 (Zikopoulos, 1991). It would be interesting to know how Japanese and Americans view the impact of international education on the many facets of their own societies. The present study focused on the perceived rather than "real" impact of international education on one's society. Past studies tended to focus on the more or less "real" impact. Thus, the present study provides a basis for comparison between "perceived" and "real" impact of international education. Perception of the impact of international education by itself is also important because perception determines subsequent action. The future of international education could very well be affected by today's public's perception of it. The specific objectives of the present research study were:

1. To compare Japanese students and American students on how they VIEW the impact of "students (Japanese or American) returning from abroad" on their own society's politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations.

2. To compare Japanese students and American students on how

they VIEW the impact of "foreign students" on their host (Japanese or American) society's politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations.

Method

Subjects

Thirty-four randomly selected American students attending a Japanese university in Osaka, Japan, participated in the present study. They were all undergraduate students. At the same institution, 34 Japanese students who had just come back from one year study abroad were randomly selected to participate in the present study. They were also undergraduate students.

Instruments

The present study utilized two semantic differential scales. One scale was designed to assess a student's perception of the impact of "NATIVE students returning from abroad" on NATIVE politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations. The other scale was designed to assess the student's perception of the impact of "FOREIGN students on NATIVE politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations. Possible rating ranged from 1 (negative impact) to 7 (positive impact). Two versions of this pair of semantic differential scales were prepared--an English version for the American students and a Japanese version for the Japanese students. The "back-translation" approach (see Lonner & Berry, 1986) was employed to construct the Japanese version of the semantic-differential scales.

Procedure

The American students were administered the English version of the two semantic differential scales . One scale assessed their perception of the impact of "AMERICAN students returning from abroad" on U.S. politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations. The other scale assessed their perception of the impact of "FOREIGN students studying in the U.S." on U.S. politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations.

The Japanese students were administered the Japanese version of the two semantic differential scales. One scale assessed their perception of the impact of "JAPANESE students returning from abroad" on JAPANESE politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations. The other scale assessed their perception of the impact of "FOREIGN students studying in JAPAN" on JAPANESE politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations.

Results

A two-way analysis of variance with repeated measure on one factor followed by simple effect tests was performed to compare the Japanese and American students on the ratings of the impact of returning students from abroad on different facets of society. The results were as shown in Table 1. Figure 1 shows the same results more clearly as graphs.

Table 1

Comparing American and Japanese Students on the Rating of the Impact of Returning Students From Abroad on Different Facets of Society

Impact of returning students on	Americans(n=34) Mean	SD	Japanese(n=34) Mean	SD	F	
Politics	5.941	1.083	5.706	1.201	0.631	
Economy	4.735	1.703	5.412	1.574	5.217	*
Technology	4.853	1.353	5.588	1.141	6.163	*
Expansion of knowledge	6.706	0.620	6.529	0.696	0.355	
International relation	6.118	1.529	6.412	0.771	0.986	
Educational development	6.000	1.237	6.176	0.954	0.355	

* $p < .05$

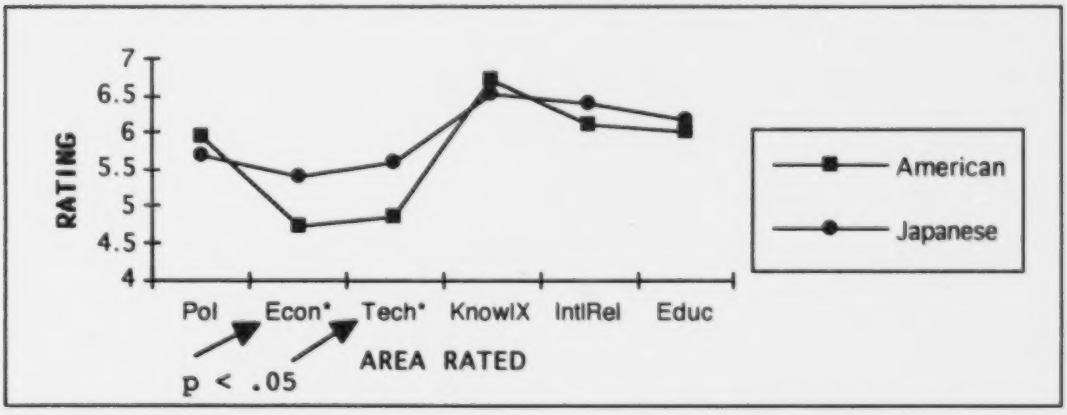

Figure 1. Comparing American and Japanese students on the rating of the impact of returning students from abroad on different facets of their own society.

Another two-way analysis of variance with repeated measure on one factor followed by simple effect tests was performed to compare the Japanese and American students on the ratings of the impact of foreign students on different facets of society. The American students rated the impact of "FOREIGN STUDENTS studying in the U.S." on U.S. politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations. On the other hand, the Japanese students rated the impact of "FOREIGN STUDENT studying in JAPAN." on JAPANESE politics, economy, technology, education, knowledge expansion, and international relations. The results were as shown in Table 2. Figure 2 shows the same results more clearly as graphs.

Table 2

Comparing American and Japanese Students on the Rating of the Impact of Foreign Students on Different Facets of American and Japanese Societies

Impact of foreign students on	Americans(n=34) Mean	SD	Japanese(n=34) Mean	SD	F
Politics	5.176	1.317	4.765	1.285	1.699
Economy	5.353	1.303	4.706	1.318	4.196 *
Technology	4.147	1.191	4.676	0.992	2.809
Expansion of knowledge	6.206	1.132	5.706	1.249	2.505
International relation	5.794	1.623	5.647	1.369	0.217
Educational development	5.471	1.355	5.647	1.160	0.312

* $p < .05$

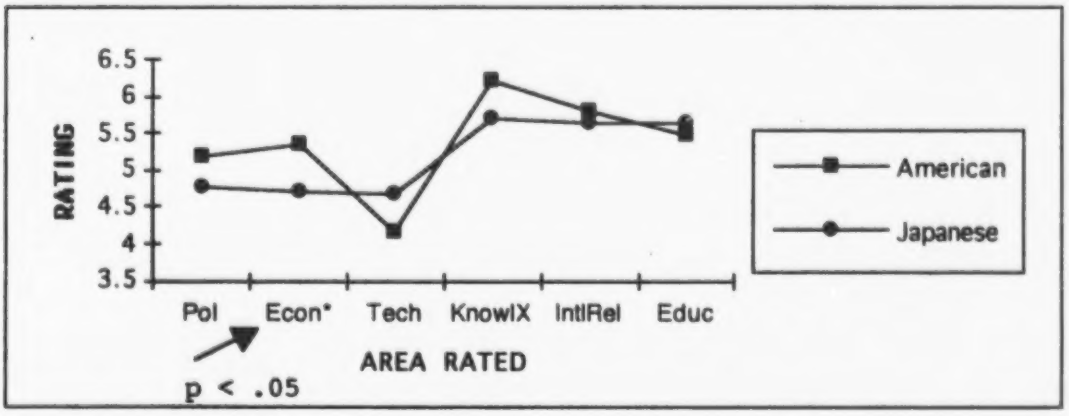

Figure 2. Comparing American and Japanese students on the rating of the impact of foreign students on different facets of their host society

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Discussion

As indicated in Figure 1, the American students' perception of the impact of fellow American students returning to America from study abroad on American society is different from the Japanese students' perception of the impact of fellow Japanese students returning to Japan from study abroad. The significant difference lies in two areas--the impact on economy and the impact on technology. The Japanese students viewed the effects more positively. This could be due to the fact that the tremendous advancement in economy and technology in Japan during this century has coincided with the sending of large number of Japanese students to study abroad. On the other hand, Figure 2 indicates that the American students' perception of the impact of foreign students in the U.S. on American society is different from the Japanese students' perception of the impact of foreign students in Japan. However, the significant difference lies in only one area--the impact on economy. The American students viewed the effects more positively. This could be due to the fact that there are many more foreign students in the U.S. than in Japan. According to Baker, Michael, Schmitz, and Harrison (1987), there were 343,777 foreign students in the U.S. in 1987. Two third of them paid their own way, pumping $2 billion to $3 billion into the economy every year.

Despite the differences between the Japanese and American students shown in Figures 1 and 2, the two groups were more alike than different in their view of the impact on international education on the different facets of their societies. Only three

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out of a total of 12 comparisons indicated significant difference between the two groups. Both groups' view on the impact of international education, in general, was positive since none of the average ratings fell below 4--the midpoint on a semantic differential scale.

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